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THE LITERATURE OF THE GREAT WAR¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE PRESENT war surpasses all previous human armed conflicts in nearly every respect. It is true that the scenes of its important fighting are hardly as widely distributed over the earth's surface as in the great wars of the eighteenth century, nor can its duration, in all probability, be as great as that of several previous wars. But in the number of inhabitants of the belligerent nations and in the number of actual combatants, in the wealth that can be drawn upon and in the actual expenditures upon the war, in the vast hosts of prisoners and of the sick, wounded, and killed, in the millions who are being impoverished, widowed, and orphaned, in the infinity of thrilling experiences and brave deeds, in the multitude of political, economic, and racial questions involved, and in the probable determinative influences upon future times, precedent has already been far transcended by the war which began in 1914.

In proportion to the war itself is the task which confronts its historians and librarians. This is a day when

¹ A paper read by the author before the Illinois Library Association at Ottawa, Illinois, October 11, 1916.

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of international political events accompany the war: as the temporary organization of conquered provinces, and the acts of belligerents toward neutrals upon sea and land.

As for diplomatic events, these led toward the war, they were very numerous in connection with its outbreak, and, though interrupted almost entirely as between enemies, they continue abundantly within each belligerent group, and between belligerents and neutrals. The conclusion of peace is likely to furnish as important negotiations as any in antecedent human history. Movements for a revised and respected body of international law, and for a world-organization which will hinder, if not prevent, war, are already begun, and are being advanced strongly by the existence and the incidents of the present conflict.

The commercial events of the world are in all countries affected by the war. Trade-routes have ceased to pass across the common frontiers of belligerent nations. Trade has increased greatly in unaccustomed channels. The Dardanelles have long been closed, the outlet of the Baltic Sea hindered, and the Suez Canal threatened. The ancient way from Belgrade to Constantinople was blocked and again opened. Commercial ships have been destroyed, interned, and commandeered for public service. The railroad systems of great nations are being operated primarily for war. New lines are being hurried through, as on the routes from Constantinople to Bagdad and Egypt, and from Petrograd to Kola on the Arctic

Ocean. Prices are changing in all countries, belligerent and neutral, in most cases having already risen very materially. The production of many articles and commodities has diminished, as of beet sugar in Germany and books in France; that of others has increased, as of grain and munitions of war in the United States. Governments both belligerent and neutral have assumed novel powers over trade, as in commandeering supplies, fixing prices, and controlling the consumption of bread, meat, butter, rubber, gasoline, and the like. Orders in council and constructive or actual blockades have led to an immense amount of interference with trade, by detention of ships and diversion or confiscation of their cargoes. The fear of submarine attack and floating mines, and the scarcity of shipping, have raised the rates of marine insurance and ocean freight everywhere, and cause at times the congestion of land freight near the seaboard of the United States. Balances of trade have shifted, and rates of exchange have fluctuated. Governments have gone into business on a vast scale. They have taxed and borrowed and spent in quantities beyond all precedent and expectation. All together they are raising and spending, it is estimated, some eighty million dollars a day. No part of the world is so distant and no individual so poor, as not to lose or gain, and have the conditions of business life modified, by the great war.

The central events of the war are of course military and naval. How shall the number, the importance, and the complexity of these even be stated? Consider the areas

of fighting: the long lines at the east and west of the Central Powers; the various fields in the Balkan peninsula—Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Roumania; the four principal areas where the Turks have fought—the Dardanelles, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Suez; the four African regions—Togoland, the Cameroons, German Southwest Africa, German East Africa; the Asiatic regions, Tsingtau, and the Pacific islands; the scenes of naval combat—off Coronel, the Falkland Islands, Malacca, and the Black, North, and Baltic seas; and the wide-flung theaters of submarine and aërial activity. Under all manner of circumstances, in the desert and the forest, in country and town, in snow and heat, in rain and drought, on plain and mountain, men fight and fall. Consider the great phases of the war, on the land, on the sea, and in the air, with their subphases: trench-digging and trench-fighting, marching and encamping, charging and retreating, invading and defending, watching, shooting, mining, scouting, patrolling, shelling, and bombing. Consider the different arms of the service: on land the infantry, cavalry, and commissariat, the medical and intelligence departments and the high command; on the sea the officers, sailors, and marines, the stokers, engineers, and gunners. Consider the great campaigns, movements, and battles, where an individual man is as nothing, and where ten thousand fall in making a small dent in the enemy's lines. In all this, men in millions think and act, toil and struggle, fall sick, receive wounds, die. The number of events is infinite.

There is also a vast background of home activity in support of the military events. It includes the recruiting and the training of literal millions of soldiers, the manufacture of miraculous quantities of munitions (perhaps a million shells are now being made in the world each day), the production of thousands of kinds of articles of equipment, the preparation of millions of pounds of food supplies. A vast organization of men and machinery is necessary to transport men, munitions, and supplies to the places where they are wanted, as from Germany to Bagdad and Beersheba, from England to Salonika and Suez. The transport to long distances by land and sea is, however, less wonderful than the continual ample provision of what is needed for the great lines in the main theaters of war. There is also the care of the wives and children of soldiers, of the widows and orphans of the fallen, and of the hundreds of thousands of wounded. Each belligerent country has been and is one vast hospital with an endless procession of sick and wounded, who arrive from the front, and, after a period of care, return to the front, or pass as cripples or invalids into more or less helpless private life, or are borne prematurely to the grave. The very numerous organizations for charitable and relief work of various kinds perform a multitude of acts. The work of Americans alone, as in the Belgian and Armenian relief, is of immense and increasing extent.

Most numerous of all are the psychological events, which include the experiences and emotions of those affected by the war. These inward and hidden events are

precisely the ones which most concern the historian and the librarian, for they initiate the transition between all the other events and written words. Since not only direct participants in the war, but nearly all other intelligent beings on the face of the earth, encounter an endless series of psychological reactions from the innumerable happenings of these crowded years, the possibilities of producing material are appallingly numerous.

THE OBSERVERS

I have endeavored to bring to your minds the infinite number, variety, and importance of the events of the war. Such a survey gives exercise in classification, but the events themselves do not concern you directly as librarians. What you will handle is the written or printed material which describes and discusses the events of the war. But before this can be understood thoroughly, it is necessary to look rapidly at the classes of persons who are in a position to prepare material; that is to say, at the various groups of observers.

A primary distinction among the observers in the great war is that between officials and others. From the latter may perhaps be separated off an intermediate class of semi-officials. Officials in pursuance of their prescribed duties visit and remain in certain places where ordinary citizens may not come, and many of them are expected to observe carefully and record events which others are not permitted even to see. The number of officials of all grades in the present war from first to last will probably

number in the neighborhood of one hundred millions. In the field and afloat in the navies are the officers, soldiers, marines, and sailors; the physicians, stretcher-bearers, ambulance-drivers, and chaplains. The transport service by land and sea, which brings forward in trains, motor cars, and wagons, and in steam and sailing vessels, to exactly the places needed in the vast theaters of war, the soldiers, cannon, shells, food supplies, clothing, repair material, and the like, and takes back the human and other wreckage, demands the activity of hundreds of thousands of men. At home in each belligerent land are those who direct operations of every kind, and who prepare the enormous quantities of supplies for use at the front, and those also who recruit and train the troops. The tendency is to draw in more and more of the population to official, or at least to semi-official, service; for instance, the officers and crews of nearly all the merchant ships of England, and the manufacturers of munitions of war in every land, including even great numbers of women and children.

The unofficial observers in a way include all the rest of the people of the world, as potential producers of material for the librarian and historian to handle. But there are many special groups. There are nurses by the tens of thousands for the hundreds of thousands of wounded. One thing we are spared, in that it has not been permitted since the Spanish-American War that clouds of correspondents should clog the battlefields, with their spy-glasses, cameras, and notebooks, and great facility in the

composition of despatches, whether they have seen anything or not. Nevertheless, a considerable number of war correspondents, including semi-official "eyewitnesses," explorers, travelers, reporters, novelists, and poets, has been allowed to come near the scenes of action, and at times even to visit the front. Prisoners of war by millions are accumulating experiences; while at home, most keenly in the belligerent lands, but with great interest in every neutral land also, all persons of the age of discretion and of sound mind (and some who seem hardly to be so) have learned more or less about the war, and are in a position to produce some written material.

The war is not yet ended, and direct observation has not ceased. But after it is all over, there will be armies of observers who will visit the battlefields and ruins, and talk with participants, and afterward write battalions of books. The process has begun already in areas which the war has covered for a time and then abandoned.

THE PRIMARY HISTORICAL MATERIAL

These reflections lead us to consider next the primary or first-hand historical material that is provided by the events of the Great War and that may be utilized by observers who also become writers. I hope that you will pardon me for handling this subject more or less along the lines of historical research. Let me explain that we used the word "trace" to indicate any material and enduring result of an event or action. It is a relieving thought that not all events leave discernible traces, and

that only such as do so can add to our historical and bibliographical burdens. The primary historical material furnished by the war may then be divided into physical traces, psychological traces, and written material.

Physical traces prolong the time of direct observation. Consider first the modifications of the land. It is the case, I believe, that earthworks built by Julius Caesar in his campaigns have been identified after nearly two thousand years. So for many generations it will be possible to see in Europe, left by the present war, forts, military roads and railroads, earthworks and trenches, shell-pits, ruins, and graves. Some months ago a correspondent reported that on the French side alone of the western fighting-line there were, in places behind each mile of front, twenty miles of trenches for approach, retreat, and refuge. Where the line has been long in one location, there have been built continuous underground villages. The process of advance at present involves preparing the way by the use of large shells filled with extremely powerful explosives, and the word "blasting" is used to describe the terrible artillery preparation for a charge. Such a method changes the face of the country, filling small valleys, cutting down hills, and destroying tillable surfaces and the soil itself. The face of the earth will long show the marks of this war.

For generations and even centuries families in their houses, and cities and nations in their museums and public squares and harbors, will preserve relics of the war,

such as weapons, bullets, shells, flags, uniforms, cannon, floating mines, aeroplanes, and even ships, even as in our own country are preserved swords of Bunker Hill, and battle flags and cannon balls, muskets and monitors from the Civil War.

There is also accumulating, in the face of many restrictions and difficulties, no small number of photographs and drawings, and paintings and moving-picture films. We may reflect further that for some fifty or sixty years hundreds of thousands of men will carry about with them personal physical traces of the Great War, in scars, mutilations, and artificial limbs. Of course few of these physical traces of the war, unless it be photographs and other pictures, are likely to be stored in libraries, but what is written about them will demand a place upon the shelves.

Nor can the psychological traces be stored directly in the bookstack. Nevertheless, they also will for some sixty years continue to stimulate writing. Reminiscences of our Civil War have by no means entirely ceased to appear. The psychological traces of the Great War may be summed up, as in all such cases, in the word "memories." The war may cost the lives of five or even ten million soldiers, but forty million will probably survive after taking part in it. What adventures they will be able to relate to their children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren! What reams of manuscript, what shelves of books, they will produce! They may forget some details and add others, they may boast and

they may suppress, but in every belligerent land while their lives last they will continue to talk and write from their memories of the Great War.

This brings the discussion to the written primary material—that which is the work of the eyewitnesses, who tell what they see and feel. With this we come finally to what you will have to classify and take care of. As the observers were divided into official and unofficial, so with the direct written material. But the line is not drawn at quite the same place. It is perhaps true with little exception that the official material is written by officials, but it is by no means true that all that is written by those officially connected with the belligerent countries is official material. Many men in responsible positions will one day write their informal reminiscences, while the common soldiers, who perhaps may produce no official reports whatever, will on the whole write a great deal of unofficial material.

The official material is being made in enormous quantities. Judicious selections from it have been published already, but much of it will not be seen for long years. The various governments have given out an unprecedented number of despatches of their diplomats, in their blue and yellow and green and orange and other colored books. Collections have been printed of new laws and ordinances called out by the circumstances of the war. Government departments have issued various publications, as, for instance, small books by the Prussian Ministry of the Interior on economizing food. Reports of army officers

have been published in part, as those of Sir John French on the western front (written, not by him, but by a member of his staff), or of General Hamilton in regard to the operations at the Dardanelles. Yet only the merest fraction of the reports and records made has appeared. Sven Hedin states that even commanders of batteries are required by the Germans to keep careful records.¹ The final tremendous masses of reports will one day furnish material for the books of many historians, who will work out from them reasonably accurate stories of the great battles and campaigns of the war, about which we have now only incomplete, confused, and contradictory accounts.

There is a quantity of material already published that may be called semi-official, as speeches of high personages such as Asquith and Lloyd George, Briand and Poincaré, Bethmann-Hollweg and Helfferich, the collected despatches of the official "eyewitnesses" and authorized correspondents, the bulletins of the press bureaus, and the more official *communiqués* of war offices. Sir Gilbert Parker sends to a list of persons in the United States at frequent intervals official and semi-official material in the shape of books, booklets, pamphlets, and leaflets. The number of these approaches two hundred already. The Germans try to present their side of the case to the English-speaking public in the *Continental*

¹Sven Hedin, *With the German Armies in the West* (London, 1915), p. 12.

Times, which, however, has not easily passed the British blockade during late months.¹

Whatever may be true of the quantity of official records kept, the amount of them published so far is much less than that of unofficial material produced by eyewitnesses in many places and positions. The correspondents have been few, but their per capita average of words is high. Diaries and letters of soldiers have been appearing. Sven Hedin is again the authority for the statement that every German soldier is expected to keep a diary, and that in consequence a million and a half are being written on the western front alone.² Of course such material, when published at this time, is edited carefully. The selection made from German diaries by Germans for publication in Germany is very different from that made by Frenchmen, when they find such material in the pockets of prisoners or of the slain, for publication in France and allied or neutral lands. Physicians and nurses have produced many books, with descriptions of their experiences, and they will produce more.

At home in the belligerent countries many things happen that are worthy of record. Take, for instance, the

¹An interesting comment on the value of such semi-official material is found in a letter of Sir John Fortescue, librarian to the King of England, to the *London Times* (printed in the *Times* weekly edition, October 6, 1916, p. 809), in which an appeal is made for printed regimental records.

²Sven Hedin, *loc. cit.*

In the above-mentioned letter of Sir John Fortescue, he speaks of "the unborn historian to whom, long after I am dead and forgotten, will fall the gigantic task of writing, with a nakedness of truth that is necessarily forbidden to me, the full story of the present war."

story of the production of munitions in the different lands, of the manufacture of aeroplanes and motor vehicles, or of the negotiations with neutral countries, as between the United States and Germany over the "Lusitania," or between Sweden and England over the parcel post. The story is also to be told of the efforts of both belligerent groups to win the good opinion and the financial support of the United States and other neutral countries, and to procure ammunition or hinder the sale of supplies to the other side.

The possibilities are limitless, and the material already produced is large. This primary historical material comes in the form of manuscripts, diaries, letters, reports, broadsides, and newspapers (the field newspapers are in themselves an interesting and instructive phenomenon), in general and special periodicals, and in pamphlets and books. Some books are collections of material previously published in less permanent form, as in editorials and newspaper and periodical articles. Others are from the outset written as books.

SECONDARY HISTORICAL MATERIAL

The secondary material is that produced by writers who are not eyewitnesses. The line is not always easily to be drawn. All the writers so far are, of course, contemporaries of the events they describe, and they usually introduce some contribution of their own, even if it is nothing more than the results of their prejudice and bias.

There is much daily editorial comment, and many weekly or monthly observations of military experts. There are essays and lectures designed either to convey information, or to urge an argument, or to determine a state of mind. Limited histories have appeared, as the *History of Twelve Days* by one writer, or of *Thirteen Days* by another, these being the days of the outbreak of the war. Accounts have been written of phases of the fighting, as of the Battle of the Marne, or of Von Hindenburg's victories in East Prussia.

General histories have also begun to appear. The library of the University of Illinois has several in each of the languages: English, French, German, and Italian. Some are collections of material from different countries, as the *Current History* of the *New York Times*. Some are written by various authors, and appear in numbered instalments, each of which deals with a special phase of the war, as the *London Times' History of the War*, or Baer's *Weltkrieg*. Some are by a single author, as Buchan's *Nelson's History of the War*, or Hanotaux's French account, or Mantegazza's, in Italian—the latter has a collaborator for the military events. Some are planned to appear in a series of substantial volumes, as the *Diplomatic History* edited by Professor Allen.

Bibliographical lists are not lacking. Of course the periodical guides contain as a part of their regular plan the articles on the war. It has been necessary to classify these more or less elaborately on account of their great number. The usual book catalogues may be consulted.

The lists of new books in the literary supplements of the *London Times* and the *New York Times*, in the *Boston Saturday Transcript* and in the *New York Nation* are helpful. Lange and Berry, in England, began a special bibliography of books on the Great War. They carried it through the first year of the war in three volumes with about 2,000 entries, but have as yet gone no farther. The *Cercle de la Librairie* of Paris has prepared a *Catalogue: Publications de la Guerre, 1914-1915*, which lists French books that have appeared before the present year. Hinrichs has prepared a series of special pamphlets on German war literature. The first three parts of this, covering only ten months of the war, contain between 5,000 and 6,000 titles. These are by no means all books, however, since many pamphlets are included. The Committee on Bibliography of the American Historical Association has thought of initiating a complete bibliography, but they hesitate before the enormous magnitude of the task. Good notes on the historical literature of the Great War, by Professor Dutcher, are to be found in each issue of the *American Historical Review*. A brief selected list of books can be found in the *Statesman's Year Book*.

A number of libraries are making special efforts to collect material on the war, as in France, at Lyons and Paris; in England, at London; and in our own country, at Yale University, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, and the universities of Chicago and of Illinois. The last has already several hundred books and pamphlets dealing with the war, including numerous

items in English, French, German, and Italian, and a few in other languages.

EXTRA-HISTORICAL MATERIAL

The war literature that is not strictly historical has attained dimensions of considerable size. In fact, in the belligerent lands the minds of the whole population are centered on the war, and all literature shows its influence. This situation has been only less prominent in neutral lands, though of late the prolongation of the war has caused interest in it to begin to subside. A brief study of some of our standard newspapers and periodicals will exhibit the ebb and flow of attention to the war.

Most of the bibliographical lists already mentioned contain some of this non-historical literature. There are poems in great quantity, many short stories, and not a few complete novels. Books of cartoons and caricatures, and humorous writings are many. A fairly long list of plays could be made up. Several books whose main value is artistic have appeared, including some prepared to be sold for charitable purposes connected with the war. As for medical and legal, financial and economic studies, and military treatises, a considerable library of them could be gathered already. Then there are sermons and religious meditations, sociological and philosophical works, and plans for the reconstruction of separate nations and of Europe and the world as a whole after the war. A great deal of material has been prepared especially for soldiers:

prayerbooks and religious sentiments, broadsides with inspiring and encouraging selections, and booklets with the purposes of entertainment and education.

Finally, not a few prophecies may be mentioned, from old-fashioned ones deducing the war from Scripture, and foretelling its duration and results, to much more enlightened but perhaps no more inspired attempts to reason out the decision of the war and the rearrangements that will follow.

CRITICAL PROBLEMS

When the historian considers any written or printed material, he habitually raises the question at once whether it is trustworthy. The same question is equally important for the librarian, since he does not wish to fill his shelves with books which will presently be deprived of value on account of the errors or untruths which they contain. Now the war literature yields a surprisingly large number of critical problems. The fact is that the war is not fought only on the field of battle. It is fought in the business affairs of neutral lands, and it is fought in the literature of all the world. Each side declares that the news given out by the other side is not trustworthy, and both sides are more or less right. It is easy to suppress a part of the truth, or to change the emphasis so as to give a distorted impression. It is easy to add doubtful opinions which the hasty reader takes in along with the assured facts. Nor is it impossible to invent false news. For example, despatches from Rome and Athens have been often very unreliable. Much of this false news is

fabricated hundreds of miles from the supposed scene of action. Sometimes we may think we are fortunate in having so much literature of the war while it is still in progress. But so much of the material is tainted and untrustworthy, and, at the best, biased by partisanship and hatred, that we are by no means as fortunate as we seem.

The censors are the regularly appointed agents who bring about the most of the suppression of the truth. There are large groups of these in all the belligerent lands, who pass upon despatches, articles, private letters, and even books. Their direct business is to cut out what they think may help the enemy or discourage friends. Often they are stupid—an English censor canceled a quotation from Kipling, and a German censor one from Goethe. Sometimes they are lazy, and cut out or throw away freely in order to avoid the labor of judging.

But the actual censorship does not destroy as much as the potential censorship. Every writer whose words will go before the censor learns by experience what is not wanted, and so becomes a censor himself. An inestimable amount of information that we should like to have thus fails to be written. John Morse, in his clear and interesting book, *An Englishman in the Russian Ranks*, confesses this when he says:

There has been some suppression of the names of places and localities in this book, and a few other precautions have been taken in its construction. It must be remembered that the war is far from over yet, and that there is an obligation on all writers to be

careful not to deal too freely with facts and incidents of some kinds.¹

It is to be feared that no small amount of deliberate modification of material is perpetrated. The Germans asserted early, and continue to claim, that there is a campaign of lies against them in the British press. The same accusation has been stated much more mildly by a distinguished American military authority when he said that "fifty years hence, I venture to predict, historians will speak of the British press campaign as the greatest arm of the entente powers in this war, and will place the French army second."² On the other side, the Germans have tried also to influence opinion, and the Overseas News Agency has sometimes transmitted despatches of a very suspicious nature.

Miss Jane Addams, after her trip to Europe in the interest of peace, mentions two conclusions:

First, that the people of the different countries could not secure the material upon which they might form a sound judgment of the situation, because the press with the opportunity of determining opinion by selecting data, had assumed the power once exercised by the church when it gave to the people only such knowledge as it deemed best for them to have. Second, that in each country the leading minds were not bent upon a solution nor to the great task that would bring international order out of the present anarchy, because they were absorbed in preconceived

¹ John Morse, *An Englishman in the Russian Ranks* (London: Duckworth, 1915). From the Preface.

² Captain A. L. Conger, *Miss. Valley Hist. Rev.*, September, 1916, p. 166.

judgments, and had become confused through the limitations imposed upon their sources of information.¹

Thus we are bound to look keenly at all printed material from the belligerent lands, and question whether it bears signs of suppression, addition, or falsification. Examples may be taken even from the most solemn official documents, such as the white, green, and yellow, etc., books of the governments. In the first place, we cannot now know what despatches and documents may have been omitted from these. Nor can we know where despatches have been edited with a purpose, unless the editing has been done carelessly. An instance, not in itself of great importance, may be found in the British White Paper, containing despatches sent shortly before the outbreak of the war, but I will not take your time to explain its somewhat technical details.²

The campaign of falsification is not confined to the press of the warring nations, but it extends even to our own. Perhaps most of the difficulty with American-made literature about the war results, however, from prejudice and bias. I have read newspapers which habitually put in their headlines quotation marks when referring to

¹ Jane Addams, and others, *Women at The Hague* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), p. 92.

² The despatch referred to is Enclosure 3 in No. 105, which may be compared with the version in later editions of the White Paper, and with No. 106 of the French Yellow Book. It is discussed in E. C. Stowell, *The Diplomacy of the War of 1914: The Beginnings of the War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), p. 285, note 1, and in E. von Mach, *Official Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 324, note 3.

a despatch from one of the sides in the war, announcing its successes, but which use no such practice for the other side. Other newspapers contain biased editorials, while even the so-called "military experts" are often so partisan that they cannot explain a military movement as it is, but must overpraise their friends and vituperate their enemies, and explain away the defeats of their friends and the victories of their enemies. There is too much effort to print, rather than the truth, statements that are calculated to please readers. Of course prejudice and partiality operate very strongly in the belligerent lands as well as in America. It should be said, however, that many Englishmen and many Germans are more truthful and well-balanced in discussing the war than are some of their supporters on this side of the Atlantic. But they are apt to be influenced habitually by expediency. To quote Miss Jane Addams again: "A good patriot of differing opinion finds it almost impossible to reach his fellow-countrymen with that opinion, because he would not for the world print anything that might confuse the popular mind, for war belongs to that state of society in which right or wrong must be absolute."¹

Histories of the war written now must suffer from the defects in the material that have been described, and especially from the absence of much that will later come to hand. This may be illustrated by a quotation from Stanley Washburn's *Russian Campaign*, as written from Rovna, Russian Poland, in June of 1915:

¹ Addams, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

It is utterly impossible at this time to give anything like an accurate story of the past two months in Galicia. It will be years before the information necessary for definite history can be accumulated from the various units engaged. Even then there will be gaps and inaccuracies because hundreds of the men engaged have been killed; and so few even of the generals know more than their own side of the case, that the difficulties of the historian will be enormous.¹

The histories of the future will in all probability suffer even more from an opposite cause, since the quantity of material will be so immense that its utilization will be a matter of great difficulty. It is already almost dishearteningly abundant. In future years only organized groups of scholars can deal with it adequately, and in time they are likely to produce so much in many lands and many tongues that only an organized group of librarians can classify, catalogue, and find in their libraries the innumerable pamphlets, monographs, and larger works which will treat of the Great War.

In all probability none of us will live to see the best and most satisfactory history of the war, which can be prepared only after archives have been opened freely, after patient research has sifted, tested, and organized the facts, and after the passions of the time have subsided so as no longer to obscure clearness of vision. But if we live a normal number of years, we shall see many histories of the war, of which some will be good. This discussion will have served its purpose if it suggests the means of recognizing and testing those writings on the war that are really worth while.

¹ Stanley Washburn, *The Russian Campaign* (London, 1915), p. 209.

RECENT GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY OF THE SOCIETY

- From ACADEMIA NACIONAL DE ARTES Y LETRAS, HABANA, CUBA
Anales, Tomo I, Num. 1. Enero-Marzo, 1916.
Castellanos, Jesús. Los Argonautas. La Manigua sentimental. Cuentos.—Cronicas y apuntes. Tomo II. Habana, 1916.
Hernández Miyares, Enrique. Obras completas. II. Prosas. Habana, 1916.
- From BUREAU OF RAILWAY ECONOMICS, WASHINGTON, D.C.
Railway economics. A collective catalogue of books in fourteen American libraries. Prepared by the Bureau. Chicago, 1912.
List of references on valuation of steam railways. Prepared by the Bureau. (Bulletin of the American Railway Engineering Association. Vol. XVIII, No. 196.) Chicago, 1916.
List of references on valuation of railways. Prepared by the Bureau. August 1, 1916. Multigraphed.
List of references on railroad terminals (in the Library of the Bureau). April 1, 1916. Multigraphed.
Trial bibliography on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railway. November 30, 1915. Multigraphed.
- From THE CLUB OF ODD VOLUMES, BOSTON
Year Book for 1915. Boston, 1915.
- From CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
Islandica. Vols. VIII and IX. Ithaca, 1915-1916.
- From THE GROLIER CLUB, NEW YORK
First editions of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, exhibited at the Club. New York, 1914.
A Catalogue of books illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson, exhibited at the Club. New York, 1916.
- From the authors
FIGAROLA-CANEDA, D. *Bibliografia de Luz y Cavallero*. Habana, 1916.
LAVAL, R. A. *Bibliografia de bibliografias chilenas*. Santiago de Chile, 1915.

